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ABSTRACT

Changes in marriage and procreation aspirations of South Carolina high school students between 1966 and 1973 are examined. Data were collected as part of a regional project in several Southern states. During the 1966-67 school year, all 10th grade students were interviewed in 42 randomly-selected high schools stratified by students' racial category and size of the 10th grade in 1965-66. Group interviews were used with procedures varying according to physical facilities of the schools involved and the administrators' decisions. In 1972-73, 16 schools were selected from the original sample which would best represent the original sample. There were 5,396 questionnaires returned in 1966-67 and 3,122 in 1972-73. Among the findings were: (1) the proportion giving a high ranking to getting married and raising a family increased for black and white males and black females but decreased from 34.1 percent to 30 percent for white females; (2) the average number of children wanted decreased from 1967 to 1973 for both racial groups and sexes; (3) there was a marked increase in the percentage of sophomores indicating that they expected to have no children; and (4) there was a decrease in the percentage of all race and sex groups except black males indicating that they expected to have three or more children. (NQ)

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HISTORICAL CHANGES IN MARRIAGE AND PROCREATION ASPIRATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS OF SOUTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, 1967-1973[1]

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Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to examine changes in marriage and procreation aspirations of South Carolina high school students between 1966-67 and 1972-73.

Data

The data on which this report is based were collected as a part of a regional research project involving researchers in several southern states.[3] The first contact was in 1966-67 and the second was in 1972-73.

Sample

The first group of students constitute a representative sample of all tenth grade high school students in South Carolina during the school year, 1966-67. Tenth grade students were interviewed in 42 randomly-selected high schools stratified by racial category of students and size of the tenth grade in 1965-66.

Group interviews were used with procedures varying according to physical facilities and administrators' decision of the schools involved.

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[1] Paper presented as part of a Panel on Historical Changes in Marriage and Procreation Aspirations of Southern Youth to the Rural Sociology Section of the Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists, New Orleans, Louisiana, February 1975.

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[3] Southern Regional Research Project S-81, "Development of Human Resource Potentials of Rural Youth in the South and Their Patterns of Mobility" and its predecessor project, S-61, "Human Resource Development and Mobility in the Rural South."

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Where possible, all tenth graders were interviewed in one group. The alternative method was to interview all tenth grade English classes. No attempt was made to get interviews from students who were absent.[4]

For the second contact in 1972-73, resources did not permit interviewing in all of the schools included in the first contact. Schools were selected from the original sample that, in the judgement of the project leader, would give the best representation of the original sample. For example, in three towns, both the Negro and white schools were included in the original sample. Since integration had been effected since the first study, the integrated schools in these towns were included in the 1973 study. In addition, one of these towns had two private academies in 1973 and permission was obtained to interview students in these schools also.

Selected characteristics of the 1966-67 and 1972-73 study samples are given in Table A.

Marriage and Procreation Aspirations

Data showing changes in marriage and procreation aspirations and expectations are given in Tables 1-9. Totals given in these tables include only those who answered the questions on which the tables are based. Consequently, totals vary from table to table from the totals given in Table A.

Desired Age at Marriage

Respondents who indicated that they wanted to get married were asked at what age they wanted to get married. The percentage distribution of these answers is given in Table 1. The proportion wanting to get married at age 19 or less increased for all race and sex groups with the greatest increase desiring marriage at an earlier age occurring among the white females.

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[4] Boyd, Virlyn A., "Aspirations, Expectations, and Attitudes of South Carolina High School Students," AE 335, Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, South Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station, Clemson, S.C., September 1970.

Table A. Selected characteristics of sample populations in South Carolina youth study, 1966-67 and 1972-73

	1966-67	1972-73
Schools included		
Public	42	14
Private	--	2
Counties included	26	11
Useable questionnaires		
Total	5,396	3,122
White		
Male	1,799	897
Female	1,786	891
Nonwhite		
Male	820	660
Female	991	674

Number of Children Desired

Answers to the question "Assuming you do get married, how many children do you want?" are shown in Table 2. The average number of children wanted decreased from 1967 to 1973 for both racial groups and sexes. Also, the proportion desiring no children or one or two children increased except for a small decrease in the percentage of black males wanting two children. The proportion wanting three or more children decreased for all groups except black males.

Number of Children Expected

In an attempt to distinguish between aspirations and expectations, respondents were also asked to indicate the number of children they thought they would have, assuming they did get married. Answers to this question are shown in Table 3. There was a marked increase from 1967 to 1973 in the percentage of sophomores indicating that they expected to have no children. Also, there was a decrease in the percentage of all race and sex groups except black males indicating that they expected to have three or more children.

Desire for Wife Working After Marriage

The proportion of males who did not want their wife to work at all after marriage decreased for both black and white sophomores (Table 4). There was a somewhat smaller decrease in the proportion of females who expressed the desire not to work at all after marriage. On the other hand, the proportion of both black and white males who wanted their wives to work after having children increased, as did the proportion of black and white females who wanted to work after having children. The changes in desires for part-time versus full-time work are shown in Table 5.

Expectations for Wife Working After Marriage

Answers to the question (for males) "What do you expect your wife to do about working after marriage?" and (for females) "What do you expect to do about working after marriage?" are given in Tables 6 and 7. Changes in expectations for wives working followed the same pattern as the changes in desires for wives working.

Relative Importance of Marriage and the Family

Both in 1967 and in 1973, respondents were asked to rank the following items from 1 to 7 in order of their importance to them.

a. To have all the free time I want.
b. To get all the education I want.
c. To earn as much money as I can.
d. To get the job I want most.
e. To live in the kind of place I like best.
f. To have the kind of house, car, furniture, and other things like this I want.
g. To get married and raise a family.

Rankings given to the last item "To get married and raise a family" are given in Tables 8 and 9. The proportion giving a high (1 or 2) ranking to getting married and raising a family increased for black males, white males, and black females but decreased from 34.1 percent to 30.0 percent for white females. The proportion of both black males and black females giving a low level of importance to getting married and raising a family decreased. Rankings indicated an increase in low rankings (6 and 7) for getting married and raising a family for both white males (increase of 1.0 percent) and white females (increase of 5.3 percent).

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Table 1. Change in desired age at marriage of South Carolina Sophomores, by race and sex, 1967-1973

Desired age at marriage	Males						Females					
	Black			White			Black			White		
	1967	1973	% change	1967	1973	% change	1967	1973	% change	1967	1973	% change
19 or less	.7	3.9	3.2	4.6	11.8	7.2	6.6	13.4	6.8	19.0	29.7	10.7
20-22	21.1	26.6	5.5	41.7	45.5	3.8	41.6	39.3	-2.3	55.8	47.4	- 8.4
23-24	20.6	19.6	-1.0	18.4	16.3	-2.1	25.6	24.6	-1.0	15.8	12.3	- 3.5
25 or more	57.6	49.9	-7.7	35.4	26.4	-9.0	26.1	22.6	-3.5	9.4	10.5	1.1
Total	100	100		100	100		100	100		100	100	
N =	705	511		1562	798		922	610		1728	854	
Mean	23.7	24.4		22.9	23.3		22.5	22.3		21.4	21.4	
Median	25.0	24.0		22.0	21.0		21.0	22.0		21.0	20.0	

Differences, 1967-1973	df	X^2	p <
Black males	3	21.961	.01
White males	3	55.720	.01
Black females	3	20.789	.01
White females	3	42.121	.01

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Table 2. Change in number of children desired by South Carolina Sophomores, by race and sex, 1967-1973

Number of children desired	Males						Females					
	Black			White			Black			White		
	1967	1973	% change	1967	1973	% change	1967	1973	% change	1967	1973	% change
None	1.3	18.2	16.9	1.8	12.4	10.6	2.6	9.1	6.5	1.9	7.3	5.4
1	1.8	2.4	.6	2.9	4.3	1.4	6.5	6.7	.2	2.1	2.4	.3
2	34.5	30.5	-4.0	40.4	50.1	9.7	50.1	51.9	1.8	35.1	49.2	14.1
3	22.6	16.4	-6.2	29.7	21.5	-8.2	16.4	13.0	-3.4	23.3	20.1	-3.2
4	27.7	16.3	-11.4	17.9	8.9	-9.0	15.5	15.6	.1	25.5	16.2	-9.4
5 or more	12.1	16.2	4.1	7.2	2.8	-4.4	8.8	3.8	-5.0	12.2	4.9	-7.2
Total	100	100		100	100		100	100		100	100	
N =	707	626		1558	888		918	661		1733	890	
Mean	3.1	2.5		2.8	2.1		2.6	2.3		3.0	2.4	
Median	3.5	3.0		3.2	2.8		1.9	2.3		3.1	2.9	

Differences, 1967-1973	df	X^2	$p <$
Black males	5	135.193	.01
White males	5	192.336	.01
Black females	5	47.999	.01
White females	5	131.168	.01

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Table 3. Change in number of children expected by South Carolina Sophomores, by race and sex, 1967-1973

Number of Children Expected	Males						Females					
	Black			White			Black			White		
	1967	1973	% change	1967	1973	% change	1967	1973	% change	1967	1973	% change
None	3.8	21.8	18.0	3.1	14.2	11.1	5.9	11.8	5.8	2.3	7.5	5.2
1	4.7	3.3	-1.5	3.7	3.6	-0.1	8.9	9.3	0.4	3.4	3.9	0.6
2	30.5	21.8	-8.7	36.7	47.1	10.4	37.3	40.8	3.5	36.8	51.9	15.1
3	22.4	17.6	-4.8	29.2	22.7	-6.6	18.3	14.4	-3.9	24.7	21.5	-3.2
4	23.2	13.6	-9.5	17.9	8.7	-9.2	19.3	16.2	-3.0	22.8	12.4	-10.4
5 or more	15.4	21.8	6.4	9.4	3.8	-5.6	10.3	7.4	-2.9	10.0	2.7	-7.3
Total	100	100		100	100		100	100		100	100	
N =	682	618		1487	874		901	659		1672	882	
Mean	3.0	2.5		2.8	2.1		2.6	2.3		2.8	2.2	
Median	3.5	2.1		3.1	2.7		2.7	2.8		3.3	2.8	

Differences, 1967-1973	df	X^2	p <
Black males	5	123.06	.01
White males	5	173.38	.01
Black females	5	25.45	.01
White females	5	145.81	.01

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Table 4. Change in desires for wife working after marriage of South Carolina Sophomores, by race and sex, 1967-1973

Desire for Wife Working After Marriage	Males						Females					
	Black			White			Black			White		
	1967	1973	% change	1967	1973	% change	1967	1973	% change	1967	1973	% change
Not work at all	40.2	26.8	-13.4	63.3	46.6	-16.7	8.7	4.4	-4.3	10.7	8.1	-2.6
Work until children	42.7	47.5	4.8	30.3	41.6	11.3	46.0	45.1	-0.9	61.2	59.1	-2.1
Work after children	17.1	25.7	8.6	7.4	11.8	4.4	45.3	50.5	5.2	28.1	32.8	4.8
Total	100	100		100	100		100	100		100	100	
N =	714	541		1725	837		910	632		1759	875	

Differences, 1967-1973	df	X^2	p <
Black males	2	28.578	.01
White males	2	58.117	.01
Black females	2	11.913	.01
White females	2	9.033	.02

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Table 5. Change in degree of work desired for wife after marriage by South Carolina Sophomores, by race and sex, 1967-1973

Degree of work desired for wife after marriage	Males						Females					
	Black			White			Black			White		
	1967	1973	% change	1967	1973	% change	1967	1973	% change	1967	1973	% change
Work before children												
Part-time	40.8	36.4	-4.4	56.0	52.8	-3.2	12.9	11.9	-1.1	23.9	22.8	-1.1
Full-time	30.7	28.5	-2.2	24.5	25.1	.6	23.2	35.3	12.1	44.6	41.5	-3.1
Work after children												
Part-time	12.4	13.6	1.2	9.7	12.8	3.0	45.7	16.6	-30.1	16.9	19.5	2.6
Full-time	16.2	21.5	5.3	9.8	9.4	- .4	18.2	36.2	18.2	14.5	16.2	1.7
Total	100	100		100	100		100	100		100	100	
N =	427	396		650	447		608	604		1570	804	

Differences, 1967-1973	df	X^2	p <
Black males	3	4.669	.25
White males	3	2.857	.5
Black females	3	134.889	.01
White females	3	4.550	.25

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Table 6. Change in expectations for wife working after marriage for South Carolina Sophomores, by race and sex, 1967-1973

Expectations for wife working after marriage	Males						Females					
	Black			White			Black			White		
	1967	1973	% change	1967	1973	% change	1967	1973	% change	1967	1973	% change
Not work	30.0	21.3	-8.7	43.9	33.6	-10.3	8.9	6.9	-2.0	14.5	9.4	-5.1
Work until children	48.7	48.0	- .7	45.6	51.0	5.4	39.2	30.9	-8.2	49.9	47.9	-2.0
Work after children	21.3	30.7	9.4	10.5	15.4	4.9	51.9	62.2	10.3	35.6	42.7	7.1
Total	100	100		100	100		100	100		100	100	
N =	581	479		1674	824		828	582		1727	866	

Differences, 1967-1973	df	X^2	p <
Black males	2	16.548	.01
White males	2	28.975	.01
Black females	2	14.648	.01
White females	2	20.212	.01

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Table 7. Change in degree of work expected for wife after marriage by South Carolina Sophomores, by race and sex, 1967-1973

Degree of Work Expected for Wife after Marriage	Males						Females					
	Black			White			Black			White		
	1967	1973	% change	1967	1973	% change	1967	1973	% change	1967	1973	% change
Work before children												
Part-time	47.4	34.2	-13.2	61.2	54.5	-6.7	18.8	10.7	-8.1	23.5	17.4	-6.1
Full-time	22.2	26.8	4.7	20.1	22.3	2.2	24.1	22.5	-1.6	34.8	35.4	.6
Work after children												
Part-time	15.9	18.3	2.4	10.0	12.6	2.6	21.4	26.4	5.0	24.5	22.0	-2.5
Full-time	14.5	20.7	6.2	8.7	10.6	2.0	35.7	40.4	4.7	17.2	25.2	8.0
Total	100	100		100	100		100	100		100	100	
N =	407	377		939	547		754	542		1476	785	

Differences, 1967-1973	df	X^2	p <
Black males	3	14.982	.01
White males	3	7.048	.10
Black females	3	19.144	.01
White females	3	26.466	.01

Table 8. Change in importance of marriage and family for South Carolina Sophomores, by race and sex, 1967-1973

Importance of marriage and family	Males						Females					
	Black			White			Black			White		
	1967	1973	% change	1967	1973	% change	1967	1973	% change	1967	1973	% change
1 (High)	0.8	2.6	1.8	6.5	7.2	.6	1.3	3.9	1.9	14.6	13.7	-0.9
2	2.0	3.4	1.3	9.4	10.9	1.5	2.8	3.9	1.1	19.5	16.3	-3.2
3	4.9	6.6	1.8	13.9	13.9	--	6.4	7.2	0.8	16.8	14.8	-2.0
4	8.8	11.8	2.9	16.9	13.7	-3.2	10.7	12.3	1.6	13.4	14.1	0.7
5	13.9	11.6	-2.4	12.8	12.9	0.1	12.5	14.2	1.7	10.6	10.8	0.2
6	26.6	21.3	-5.2	15.1	15.6	0.4	19.7	17.2	-2.6	10.3	11.2	0.9
7 (Low)	41.7	42.6	0.9	25.3	25.9	0.6	45.9	41.4	-4.5	14.8	19.1	4.3
Total	100	100		100	100		100	100		100	100	
N =	737	568		1774	877		918	642		1781	884	
Mean	5.7	5.7		4.7	4.5		5.7	5.4		3.6	3.9	
Median	6.2	6.0		5.5	5.9		6.9	6.5		4.1	4.5	

Differences, 1967-1973	df	X^2	$p <$
Black males	6	18.325	.01
White males	6	5.751	.50
Black females	6	11.425	.10
White females	6	12.774	.05

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Table 9. Change in level of importance of marriage and family for South Carolina Sophomores, by race and sex, 1967-1973

Level of importance of marriage and family	Males						Females					
	Black			White			Black			White		
	1967	1973	% change	1967	1973	% change	1967	1973	% change	1967	1973	% change
High (1,2)	2.8	6.0	3.2	15.9	18.1	2.2	4.8	7.8	3.0	34.1	30.0	-4.1
Medium (3,4,5)	27.7	30.1	2.4	43.6	40.5	-3.1	29.6	33.9	4.0	40.8	39.7	-1.1
Low (6,7)	69.5	63.9	-5.6	40.4	41.4	1.0	65.6	58.6	-7.0	25.0	30.3	5.3
Total	100	100		100	100		100	100		100	100	
N =	737	568		1774	877		918	642		1781	884	

Differences, 1967-1973	df	X^2	p <
Black males	2	9.624	.01
White males	2	3.173	.25
Black females	2	10.533	.01
White females	2	9.438	.01